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## BOOK REVIEWS



IN CHARGE OF

**M. E. CAMERON**

VITAL ECONOMY, OR, HOW TO CONSERVE YOUR STRENGTH. By John H. Clarke, M.D. A. Wessels, Newold Publishing Co., 155 Fifth Ave., New York. Price 50 cents net.

Out of his own experiences of life Dr. Clarke has evolved a philosophy which he sets forth in his little book for the guidance of others. Perhaps it is true for all men, as he claims it to be for medical men, that one is "either a fool or a philosopher at fifty." The thing is to persuade the man of twenty-five that he is going to arrive at the same goal as his predecessors over the same course. Dr. Clarke is the sworn foe to originality while claiming to be himself more or less an original; having divided the mature men of the medical profession into two classes, fools and philosophers, he goes on, by implication at least, to find that the first class comprises the great majority—besotted fools, if that is the worst kind, they must be, if they accept as he hands out his unproved and unsupported assertions: "The bath was fatal to John, he took to his bed at once, and was dead within a week." . . . "A fresh east wind produced acute nephritis." . . . "A fresh east wind caught him, pneumonia followed, and in a few days he was carried off into an untimely fresh-air grave;" and so on, he seizes upon exceptions to the rule and uses them to prove his case against the experience of the world.

Bitter as his cry is against the use of the bath and fresh air used indiscriminately, one cannot take the writer seriously. That a coachman, who is up to the work entailed by his office, with no bodily ailment whatever, should wilt and die within a week, of one warm bath, is beyond belief and impossible for Dr. Clarke to expect the reader to believe—with its inference that the bath is fatal to the ordinary working man in good health.

The chapters on the use of stimulants are in like manner robbed of a great deal of their point, by the same sweeping generalization. In this connection I quote again from the book: "It would almost seem that the human animal is determined to assert his superiority over all the rest of creation by the ingenuity he displays in discovering or manufacturing pleasant poisons for himself. The great majority of mankind are the slaves to one or more poison habits. Of these habits, the tea

habit is one of the most subtle, insinuating and injurious. It is a moot point with me whether tea does not do more harm in this country than alcohol. It does not make its victims 'drunk and incapable,' but it certainly does make them drunk. To be saturated with tea, to be constantly under its influence, to be dependent on it, is to be tea drunk. The sooner tea abstinence societies are organized the better, and tea bands of hope should be universal," etc., etc.

If one cannot accept Dr. Clarke's universal prescription for the conservation of vital energy one can at least get a great deal of amusement out of the book, which is poignant to a degree—bristling with the kind of audacious sarcasm that is usually imputed to a woman's tongue, but which in this case comes from the nimble pen of a male man as from its natural habitat. No one could feel dull while reading it, and if, on the one hand, it should excite to agonies of self-pity that stupid and lazy person who is made to go walk miles in the fresh air, when she feels that her health demands that she lie on a sofa and read novels, it is on the other hand liable to prove of salutary benefit to the gloomy and pessimistic mourner of the good old times—because no one, not even Dr. Clarke, really wants the good old times of stuffy houses and unbathed humans back again, and the horror of such a possibility would cure the grumpiest and gloomiest mourner alive.

**LIFE'S DAY; GUIDE POSTS AND DANGER SIGNALS IN HEALTH.** By William Seaman Bainbridge, A.M., M.D. Frederick Stokes Company, New York. Price \$1.35.

Written for the laity, this book is based upon a series of lectures delivered by the author at Chautauqua, and as its title indicates its office is to furnish practical, helpful suggestions with which to meet the problems which constantly confront us. "It is," says the author, "no profound philosophy of life, but a mere advocate for common-sense and moderation in all things, and of the doctrine of cheerfulness and hope."

He begins with heredity, physiological and psychical, and after giving due weight to its influence on race and individual proceeds to consider environment as the second great factor of modification. Having briefly touched upon these two great determining factors in life with which the individual finds his course either hampered or accelerated, the author goes on to consider, under the heading "Function," the entire life of the human unit from the moment of birth to old age and death. The nurture of the infant, the care of the child (especially making a plea for the child of irresponsible age) from eight to fifteen, the period of adolescence are passed in review and we are brought to manhood and